



Daniel 2, 7, 9, 12

The Coming of Messiah the Prince

The book of Daniel is an excellent prediction of the coming of the Messiah and the triumph of His messianic kingdom (2:44-45; 7:7-28; 9:24-27; 12:1-4).

The book of Daniel contains the crucial foundational passages concerning Israel and the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. In these chapters you will find one of the most dominant prophecies of the coming of Christ ever recorded. The phrase "in the latter days" describes the coming of the messianic age which God will bring in as the climax of history. It is the time when God will bring in His kingdom and all history will reach its consummation.

Daniel describes the final events when this present age with its sin and rebellion will give way to the age to come in which evil will be destroyed and all wrongs set right. The kingdom is coming is his powerful message.

We will make every attempt to allow the Bible to speak for itself as we apply the historical-grammatical rules of interpretation and therefore, let the Bible tell its own eternal message.

Years ago the beloved expositor Harry Ironside said, "Where there is light, there is bugs." It is my prayer that we see the light of the *Shekinah* glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. May He deliver us from the bugs of wild fanciful imagination and hermeneutical abuses.

I have only one agenda: what does the Word of God say. I want to examine carefully His Word and be obedient to its message.

Someone called the book of Daniel "the book of Revelation in the Old Testament."

The claim in the book is that the author Daniel made the prophecies contained therein and therefore must be taken in their plain sense. Daniel lived about 620-535 B. C. and wrote his prophecy in that time period while living in exile in Babylon.

The book of Daniel opens with Daniel as a young captive in Babylon. The events are centered on the captivity of Israel in 583 B.C. when the city was destroyed and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, took the Israelites to live in the city of Babylon and provinces of the Babylonian empire. Daniel is one of those captives who were taken as a teenager from Jerusalem to spend

one of those captives who were taken as a teenager from Jerusalem to spend the rest of his life in exile in a foreign land. The book ends with Daniel as an elderly man, honored and respected as a statesman, having served under several kings in both the Babylonian and Medio-Persian empires.

Four nations are referred to symbolically in visions and dreams in Daniel. They are Babylon (605-538 B.C.), Medio-Persia (538-331 B.C.), Greece (331-146 B.C.) and Rome (146 B.C.-A.D. 476).

A VISION OF THE FUTURE WORLD KINGDOMS (2:31-45)

In chapter two Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had some nightmares. He dreamed and called his "magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans (master astrologers), to tell the king his dreams" (2:2). He put panic in their hearts when he told them to "declare to me the dream and its interpretation" but he didn't tell them what the dream was. He forgot it! The counselors rebelled because they knew they were on the verge of exposure for their deception. If they were truly able, by supernatural power, to interpret dreams, then surely it would make no difference to them if the king remembered the dream or not. Their supernatural powers would give them the unremembered dream! Therefore, their duplicity was exposed. When they failed to come up with the dream Daniel told the king, "There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries," and He always bats a thousand. This God, says Daniel, "has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days" (2:29).

Daniel reveals and interprets King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:31-35).

You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. The head of that statue *was made* of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

In verses 36-40 Daniel interprets the dream for the king. There are four empires and Babylon is the first empire with Nebuchadnezzar as the head. A second kingdom which would be inferior to the first would follow it. History identifies it even before the book of Daniel closed, as the Medio-Persian Empire. It in turn is followed by a third empire that came upon the scene quickly. Chapter eight of Daniel reveals it as the kingdom of Greece under Alexander the Great. The fourth empire includes the Roman Empire. The book of Revelation clearly identifies this empire with the city of Rome. It is significant that the period embraced by the image covers all of time from the Babylonian Empire to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

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The remarkable thing about this dream is its ending. A final kingdom comes out of nowhere and smashes the huge image. "You continued to look until a stone was cut without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them" (v. 34). It didn't have any human help. It was by divine providence. It is the kingdom of God. The final kingdom that comes out of heaven as a stone cut without hands and strikes the grotesque image and destroys it is the kingdom of God. All of the kingdoms of men will end at the appearing of God's kingdom. If we have any doubt it is quickly cleared up in verse 44. "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever." Ultimately God's kingdom will prevail over all the earth with the right monarch on the throne. He will be the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. He is the "blessed and only sovereign" (1 Timothy 6:15). He is God's rightful King. God's eternal purpose will then be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). It is the kingdom of God through the reign of the Messiah (cf. Luke 1:31-33; John 18:33-40). "How great are His signs, and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation" (Daniel 4:3).

It is also significant that we have not yet reached the end of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its meaning. As we shall see in this Hebrew prophecy the empire of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has long ago crumbled into dust and the great Babylon is an uninhabited desolation of ruins covered with the dust of the centuries. However, it is still the dream that this king dreamed that is being fulfilled by the world political powers even in our day.

Daniel has several Messianic prophecies: 2:44, 45; 7:13-14; 9:24-26.

THE "SON OF MAN" IS COMING (7:13-14).

Chapters two and seven seem to follow the same general pattern. Most scholars interpret the four beasts in chapter seven as the same nations we saw in chapter two, Babylon, Medio-Persia, Greece and an empire beginning with Rome but extending to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Daniel writes,

I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.
And to Him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language
Might serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed.

The "Son of Man" referred to here is not strictly a man as other men are but appeared as other men. It is a comparison. We immediately think of the divine and human nature of Jesus Christ, the God-man. His two natures are perfectly working together. This divine nature is reflected in the fact that He appears "with the clouds of heaven."

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This is the term Jesus used to identify Himself with humanity. It speaks of His lowliness, humanity, patience as well as triumph and victory. He uses the term over 80 times in the Gospels as a substitute for the pronoun "I." He used it when making great claims on men and when referring to His suffering, death and resurrection. But He also uses it when speaking of His future glory and His coming again (Matthew 16:27, 28; 19:28; 24:30; 25:31; Luke 22:30).

In the book of Revelation He is seen in the opening chapters as possessing all power in heaven and on earth. He takes the scroll with the seals and opens it. Daniel sees this same person coming with clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days (cf. Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62). Christ is often associated with coming in clouds of heaven (Matthew 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; Revelation 1:7; 14:14).

Jesus told the high priest at his trial, "You shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heavens." The high priest knew what Jesus was saying and almost had a stroke. This is why they voted that night to kill Jesus and crucify Him the next morning.

On another occasion Jesus said, "The Son of Man shall come in His glory with all His angels with Him. Then He will sit on His glorious throne" (Matthew 25:31). At that time His throne will be established and all nations shall gather before Him and worship Him. The Lord God is in sovereign control of history.

The promised kingdom in Daniel is fulfilled in the coming of Jesus and the establishment of His kingdom. It is now and yet to be in that it is already present in the coming of Jesus to this earth, and will reach its consummation when He returns in glory at the second coming. We proclaim the kingdom of God when we preach the death of Jesus for our sins and His resurrection. We enter the kingdom when we repent and put our faith in Christ.

Daniel gives us absolute assurance that there shall finally come an eternal dominion by the Messiah. It is a double statement in verse fourteen: "everlasting dominion" and "will not pass away." The parallel statement reinforces the duration of His Kingdom, "and His kingdom will not be destroyed." The kingdom will be established for all eternity.

The title "Son of Man" has depths of meaning for Jesus' profound sense of messianic consciousness. This Son of Man is also the Suffering Servant of Yahweh who will reign eternally as the King of glory.

THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH THE PRINCE (9:24-27)

Chapter nine of Daniel is in the context of the prophet-statesman praying over the prophecy of Jeremiah regarding the 70 years of exile in Babylon. God sent the angel Gabriel in response to the prophet's prayer (9:20-23). Daniel records what Gabriel said to him:

Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*. So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

desolate."

Seventy Weeks (v. 24)

God marks out a specific period of time. He even gives a definite starting point when the time period will begin. It is a clear precise recorded event in history. Gabriel speaks in symbolic language. The Hebrew term "weeks" literally means "units of seven." All scholars agree that seventy weeks can not be ordinary week but must be seventy periods of seven years each. It is impossible to find any epoch in Jewish history, lasting but 490 days, in which the events narrated here could be verified. The "seven" means year weeks, seven years to each prophetic week. The units of seven designate years, not days or weeks. Here the seventy units of seven would equal 490 years. Daniel had been studying Jeremiah's prophecy regarding the seventy year period of captivity and realized that the time was nearing for the end of the predicted captivity. Daniel had lived through the whole Jewish captivity and was praying about it, so it was natural for him to understand these as years. These seventy weeks cannot be ordinary weeks but must be seventy periods of seven years each or 490 years which best fits the historical context.

In this revelation to Daniel the 70 weeks describes the cutting off of Messiah Prince which sharply distinguished His first coming from the time of His reign as King over Israel. This is the first passage to refer to the "Messiah" (v. 25). He is the "anointed one." The verb is *Mashach* and involves consecration. The passage speaks of the purpose, time and results of His coming. In the New Testament the title the Christ, " means the Anointed One, is built on this word and plainly refers to Jesus the Christ. The *Mashach* of v. 26 is identical with the *Mashach nagid* of v. 25, "Christ, who in the fullest sense of the word is the Anointed" (Keil).

Six objectives

Several things will take place during the 490 years. Here we have the sum total of all that God promised to do to men.

- Finish the transgression
- Make an end of sin
- Make atonement for iniquity
- Bring everlasting righteousness
- Seal up the vision and prophecy
- Anoint the most holy place

The events during this 70 "week" period have been divided into three segments. In seven "weeks" or 49 years the wall of Jerusalem will be rebuilt and restoration accomplished. This began in 445 B.C. (Nehemiah 2) when the decree was issued by King Artaxerxes. Secular historians all give the date 445 B.C. That is the correct starting point for the 490 year period. Clearly history confirms the fulfillment of that prediction when the city of Jerusalem was rebuilt.

Then followed a second period of 62 weeks of years, or 434 years, when the Messiah the Prince will be cut off and have nothing. Add 434 years to the 49 years and you have 483 years until the coming of the "anointed one, a Prince." The "anointed one" is the "Messiah Prince." From the going forth to rebuilding of Jerusalem till the coming of the Messiah Prince would be 483 years. It began in 445 B.C. and it is completed in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Jesus was 30-33 years old when the 69 units of seven were completed. This is another prediction of the death of Christ in the Old Testament. Christ in His death made atonement for iniquity (Isaiah 53:10; Romans 5:10; 3:21-22; Jeremiah 23:5-6) The Messiah was rejected by His own people and did not at that time receive the kingdom that belongs to Him as the Son of David. Then the

people and did not at that time receive the kingdom that belongs to Him as the Son of David. Then the nation that rejected the Messiah was destroyed in A.D. 70 when the Romans burned Jerusalem. Jesus prophesied the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44; 21:24).

At the destruction of the Temple the Roman soldiers were so angered by the defiant stubborn Jews that they disobeyed their generals and burned the temple, melting the gold and silver so that it ran down the cracks between the stones of the temple. To get to the precious metal the soldiers pried the stones apart and fulfilled Jesus' prediction that not one stone would be left standing upon another.

The purpose of the coming of the Messiah will be to take away the transgressions of the people (v. 24a). We know from history that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for man's sin on the cross at Calvary. The first three deal with the removal of sin and its consequences. This Jesus did on our behalf by dying on the cross.

Jesus "was cut off and had nothing" (v. 26). This "cutting off" is from a word meaning "to hewn down, to fell, to cut to pieces, signifies *to be rooted up, destroyed, annihilated*, and denotes generally a violent kind of death . . ." (Keil and Delitzsch). He received a crown of thorns instead of a royal crown of the King. He was given a broken reed instead of a royal scepter. He was hung on a bloody cruel cross instead of being seated on a throne of glory. However, in that crucifixion he "made atonement for the iniquity." The first part of the accomplishments was fulfilled when Jesus was "cut off" on the cross. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not" (John 1:11; cf. Isaiah 53:8; Mark 9:12; Luke 24:26).

Then Gabriel told Daniel, "the prince of the people who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined" (v. 26). That occurred with the complete destruction of Jerusalem by General Titus in A.D. 70. Cf. Matthew 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 19:43.

The 70th Week

What about the remaining one week or seven years? We have come up to 483 years out of the 490 years.

Some scholars take the final "week" as having already taken place, applying it to the first coming of Christ. The cutting off of the Messiah is followed by the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, then by desolations unto the end. Titus accomplished the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70. This interpretation sees its purpose and fulfillment in the sacrificial death of Christ.

Other scholars view the last "week" or seven years as in a holding pattern. Nothing in history of Israel have yet fulfilled this remaining seven years of the prophecy of Daniel. There is no account in Acts to indicate when this period ended. The 70th week has yet not come. We are still waiting for the events of the last week to occur. The only conclusion is the remaining seven years is still future and we are waiting for the final week to begin. Everything has been accomplished through the death of Christ to make atonement for iniquity. However, the "bringing in everlasting righteousness" will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom. The "anointing of the most holy place" could refer to the dedication of the holy of holies in the millennial temple (Ezekiel 41-46), or the enthronement of the Messiah as the King of kings in the Millennium.

If this view is correct then "the prince to come" is a reference to the Antichrist who will make a firm covenant with many for one week, including a covenant with Israel permitting her to restore sacrifices in the Temple of Jerusalem (cf. v. 27; Matthew 24:15-21; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). In the middle of that seven year period, the Antichrist will break his covenant and stop the sacrifices. He will establish his own wicked rule and religion (v. 27b; cf. Revelation 19:20). The defeat of the Antichrist by the Lord Jesus Christ will lead to the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom.

Christ will lead to the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom.

EVEN SO, COME LORD JESUS

When will this take place? No one knows! The message of the Scriptures is for us to be ready for Christ's return. Bible prophecy as a rule avoids setting dates in the future. When you hear someone on radio or TV, or in the newspaper or in their latest book speculating about dates and codes, stop and remember no one knows when He is coming. Only the heavenly Father knows when. Burn the book and go on with life. Any date setting is foolishness. It is a definite sign that the individual or group is like Nebuchadnezzar's soothsayers.

Because this great prophecy of Daniel has already been partly fulfilled in precise accuracy concerning the first coming of Jesus Christ, we can rest assured that the rest of this prophecy will be as accurately and fully fulfilled when He returns. Let's leave the logistics up to His sovereign knowledge and power (Acts 3:17-21). Since the first 69 weeks have been perfectly fulfilled according to Daniel's prophecy, I am confident He will work out in His own perfect way and time the one remaining "week" to His full satisfaction.

If we expect too little from prophecy we will find little in it. You cannot see too much of Christ in His Word.

God is steadily moving toward the final goal in His dealings with men. As you study the words of Moses and the prophets keep in mind the meaning and significance reaches far beyond their own plain sense (cf. Luke 24:44ff). They point beyond themselves to their fulfillment in Christ and the Good News of His salvation. Jesus told two of His disciples after He rose from the dead: "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:44-45, NET).

Like the temporary stopping of the missile launch countdown clock, God's clock on Israel will resume again. It would appear there has been "a partial hardening to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved . . . From the standpoint of the gospel they (Israel) are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:25-29).

Are you ready for His return? Even so, come Lord Jesus.

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